Soap Carvings and Other Forms of African Art

Excerpts from websites of African Art:

<http://www.atlanta-midtown.com/nonprofit/villages/products3.html>

Background: Kenya has one of the fastest growing populations in the world. This creates a severe job shortage. By carving kisii stone, artisans are able to provide for their families.  
  
Kenyan soapstone or "kisii" (kiss-ee\*-ee) is only found in the Tabaka Hills in Western Kenya. The stone comes in a variety of colors ranging from black to white and even pink. Stones are quarried and then hand-carried to workshops as far as six miles (10 km) away. Craftspeople use a panga, a large knife, to break the stone to size and carve the rough shape. Details are done with a kisu, a small knife. Following this, items are polished with sandpaper and cleaned with a small brush.

<http://www.artmuseums.com/africa.htm>

This site provides references and information on a variety of African Art forms and provides suggestions for African Art Projects which are easy to do, educational and fun.

Create a faux "Kisii" sculpture from an Ivory Soap Bar. First soften the Ivory Soap with a little water and then use sculpture tools such as a plastic knife to cut the "sculpture," into various animal shapes and toothpicks to add details. Research the African symbolic meaning of the animals selected for the project.

Rock Paintings of the Tanzania area are plentiful.  African or Native American rock paintings (pictographs) can be recreated by drawing with charcoal onto a flat smooth rock. First prime the rock with lard or vegetable shortening.

 Pictograph  Petroglyphs

You can also carve into a Plaster of Paris mixture poured into a recycled plastic meat tray to create carved images (petroglyphs).  Mix the Plaster of Paris according to directions and pour it into a thoroughly cleaned meat tray or other container and let it dry.  Draw a selected animal design on a sheet of paper and lay the drawing on top of the dry Plaster of Paris and retrace drawing.  Brush any excess Plaster of Paris from the drawing and paint the entire drawing a grey wash.  You've got a "faux" incised etching. http://www.travel-destinationpictures.com/data/media/33/petroglyphs\_333.jpg